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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2007

In Today's Papers

Iraq, the US, Turks on Possible Turkish Incursion into Iraq  
All papers report the Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari said there are around 140,000 Turkish troops massed at the border with Iraq. "We understand Turkey's legitimate concerns, but still think that this matter can be negotiated. The best solution would be the withdrawal of Turkish troops," Zebari said. He also noted Turkey, Iraq, and the US have a joint security committee, adding Iraq would be willing to host the committee activities and urged Turkey to send a representative.

Papers quote State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack as saying in response to a question that "it's not unusual that Turkish troops are conducting wide-ranging operations against the PKK" in the southeast of Turkey. Papers quote Pentagon Spokesman Bryan Whitman as saying the US believes "Turkey has legitimate concerns" about the PKK but that a military incursion is "not the way to solve the problem." Papers also quote White House Spokesman Tony Snow as saying "we are certainly concerned about the PKK and other terror organizations but protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq is also important."

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul said during a TV interview, "Turkey has the right to demand the US cooperate since it's the US that is controlling Iraq now. We have told the US it is not enough to merely recognize the PKK as a terrorist organization." Prime Minister Erdogan said for now the government did not have on its agenda a request for a parliamentary resolution for an incursion. "But that does not mean it cannot happen; we will take any step we see necessary," Erdogan maintained.

Editorial Commentary on Impact of Northern Iraq on Turkey-US Ties  
Yilmaz Oztuna comments in the conservative-nationalist *Turkiye*:  
"The bombing in the Turkmen town Tuzharmatu which killed at least 150 innocent people; sending suicide bombers to Istanbul and Izmir; and 'science fiction' movies showing the US distributing weapons to the PKK -- all these actions have one main target: to damage

Turkey-US relations to an extent that cannot be improved for years and encourage an armed clash between the two countries. The Turkmen massacre took place just to provoke Turkey against the US. We should remember that it is inevitable that the Kurds will do something before the US withdraws from Iraq."

Can Atakli writes in the mainstream Vatan: "PM Erdogan has stood against TGS Chief General Buyukanit's request for a cross-border operation into Northern Iraq for a long time. After more than two months, PM Erdogan said 'we are waiting to hear from the US, after that I will talk with President Bush, and then, we will do what is necessary.' What will Bush say? More important than this is what our government's stance to these developments would be. There are rumors that the government will convene the parliament extraordinarily just a week before the [July 22] elections to have the motion for a cross-border operation into Iraq approved. No doubt that the parliament will pass the motion. But, what will happen after that is anyone's guess. Some say that just a few days before the elections the order will be given for an operation into Iraq and by doing that, the AKP government will benefit from this 'brave atmosphere' and will get more votes. Some others say that the government will get the authorization and will hold on to it until after the elections, allowing tensions to escalate, without taking any action for a cross-border operation."

#### Turkish Leaders on Presidential Elections

All papers report Prime Minister Erdogan said Monday that after the July 22 general elections, he will be ready to seek a compromise on the presidency and prepare a list of candidates to discuss with other parties. He said the authorities of the president will be restricted and a "strengthened" prime ministerial system will be implemented, "as in Austria or Finland." The main opposition CHP

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leader Deniz Baykal said his party will not accept one of the candidates named by Erdogan, followed by MHP leader Devlet Bahceli who said the PM was "not sincere." Baykal suggested a candidate who is not a member of the parliament be selected. Mainstream papers predict Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul will not be among Erdogan's candidates.

#### State of Education Deteriorating in Turkey

All papers report the results of the High School Entrance Examination (OKS), taken by 824,676 eighth graders competing to get into Turkey's top schools, saying the results point to a deepening divide reflecting regional and financial disparities and the shortcomings of primary education in Turkey. The number of students who got a "zero" on the exam was 27,277. Private schools did significantly better than public schools in this year's OKS. The mainly Kurdish southeastern province of Hakkari was on the bottom of the list with the eastern and southeastern provinces of Sirnak, Ardahan, Agri, and Kars close to the bottom. Teachers' union Egitim-Sen said the results were a striking reflection of the increasing divide between the rich and the poor in the education system, underlining that only children from well-off families are able to enroll in private tutoring courses which help them score well in these exams and thus win a place in prestigious high schools.

#### TV Highlights

NTV, 7.00 A.M.

#### Domestic News

- A Turkish soldier has been killed by a PKK landmine blast in the southeastern border province of Sirnak.
- Hrant Dink's lawyers have filed objections to a court decision to release four suspects arrested in connection with the murder of the Armenian journalist.
- Harriet Schmidt, director of the UN office for developing countries, told a conference of the least-developed nations in Istanbul if the force of globalization continues on the path of the last 30 years, it would completely sweep away the least developed countries.

- A consortium of Malaysia Airports Holdings, India's GMR Infrastructure and Turkey's Limak, secured on Monday the rights to Istanbul's second airport with a 1.9 billion Euro bid, and will spend about USD 250-300 million to build a new international flights terminal in Sabiha Gokcen Airport on the Anatolian side of the city.

#### International News

- Southern Cyprus's governing alliance was on the verge of dissolving on Monday after communist AKEL, the largest party in the three-way coalition, announced plans to field its own candidate in presidential elections in February.
- The Wall Street Journal reported Monday the US government is studying the possibility of signing a formal peace treaty with North Korea after more than 50 years of standoff.
- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said unless supported by Serbia, any resolution on independence for Kosovo will fail in the UN Security Council.
- French president Sarkozy will not give a traditional Bastille Day pardon to thousands of prisoners in the country's overcrowded jails, raising fears that disappointed inmates could riot.

WILSON